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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT Alleged Plans for a New Land Reform

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Letter of the Central Intelligence
Director to the United States
Archivists, 10 October 1964.
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1. [redacted] that plans have been prepared by the Central Sec-
retariat of the SED for a reorganization of agriculture in the
Soviet zone. In public it is denied that any changes are meditated;
thus Paul Merker wrote in Neues Deutschland on 14 August 1948:
"The SED does not plan to carry out a second land reform which would
divide the property of the large farmers, as is alleged for obvious
reasons. It regards the land reform as completed, and rejects
interference with the property and ownership status of the peasants,
big and little."

Nevertheless, [redacted] preparations have been made to
reduce the limit for expropriation of farm land from 100 to 50
hectares. Propaganda against the owners of large farms has already
started. They are accused of controlling the Vereinigung der gegen-
seitigen Bauernhilfe (VdgB) in the villages, and of exploiting this
control to the detriment of the "new farmers". Further, they are
reproached as "exploiting" (in contrast to "laboring") farmers,
because they employ farm laborers. These arguments were stressed by
Walter Ulbricht at the Vorstand meeting on 15 September.

3. [redacted] that the purpose is not merely to change the
composition of the managing committees of local VdgB groups, but
rather, he says, to eliminate the large farmers and then to "collec-
tivize" the villages. It is asserted that this process will begin
with the establishment of a few "model kolkhozes" which will be
advertised through a vigorous propaganda campaign. Gatherings of
farmers will then adopt unanimous resolutions in favor of collec-
tivation of all farm land, and the state governments or the
occupying power will announce that they must accede to an over-
whelming public demand. [redacted] this procedure "the path of
voluntary compulsion".

4. It is pointed out that although 3,203,461 hectares of land were
expropriated in 1945, only 2,143,727 hectares were distributed to
the landless peasants. The remainder has become the property of the
states and communities. Agricultural machinery and rural industries
were not distributed, but were turned over to the VdgB, which now

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

4,476 machinery loan stations
 266 machine parking areas
 1,218 wheel shops
 1,409 smithies
 334 repair shops
 315 mills
 30 brickyards
 1,076 tractors

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5. The land expropriated under the "land reform" included 1,972,812 hectares of arable land and pasture and 991,307 hectares of forest. It has now been proposed in a resolution adopted on 24 September 1948 by the Forest Conference of the German Agricultural Society, meeting at Oberhof in Thuringia, that all peasants who possess woodland be organized into "VdgB Forest Associations", in order to facilitate the joint management of the forests and make them more profitable. [REDACTED] these Associations would be analogous to the collective farms of the Soviet Union.

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